

REMARKS

Claims 1-17 are pending in the application.

Claims 7-11 and 13-17 have been previously withdrawn.

Claims 1-6 and 12 have been rejected.

Claim 1 has been amended as set forth herein.

Claims 1-6 and 12 remain pending in this application.

Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

I. CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-6 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter. The Applicant has amended Claim 1 as shown above. In light of these amendments, the 112 rejection is believed to be obviated, and is traversed.

For the convenience of the Examiner, a “clean” copy of amended claim 1 is on the following page:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for fabricating an integrated electronic circuit, said integrated circuit having

a substrate,

an intermediate layer of permeable material,

an interconnect layer comprising initially a part of a sacrificial material and extending beneath the intermediate layer, and

interconnect elements formed within a subpart of said part of sacrificial material of the interconnect layer,

the process comprising: forming at least one air gap within the interconnect layer by removing, through the intermediate layer, at least said subpart of sacrificial material of the interconnect layer by bringing the permeable material into contact with an agent for removing the sacrificial material, to which agent the permeable material is resistant, said intermediate layer remaining rigidly linked to the substrate outside said defined portion;

whereby the at least one air gap is formed above only a defined portion of a surface of a substrate, and said defined portion being smaller than the surface of the substrate.

Examination on the merits is respectfully requested.

DOCKET NO. STMI07-02357
Serial No. 10/781,565
PATENT

CONCLUSION

As a result of the foregoing, the Applicant asserts that the remaining Claims in the Application are in condition for allowance, and respectfully requests an early allowance of such Claims.

If any issues arise, or if the Examiner has any suggestions for expediting allowance of this Application, the Applicant respectfully invites the Examiner to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below or at *wmunck@munckbutrus.com*.

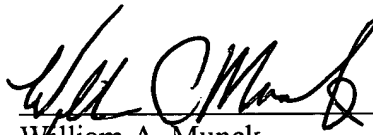
The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees connected with this communication or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0208.

Respectfully submitted,

MUNCK BUTRUS P.C.

Date:

Aug 3, 2006



William A. Munck
Registration No. 39,308

P.O. Drawer 800889
Dallas, Texas 75380
Phone: (972) 628-3600
Fax: (972) 628-3616
E-mail: *wmunck@munckbutrus.com*